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STATISTICAL SUMMARY

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS, U. S. D. A.

WASHINGTON, D. C.



JANUARY 18, 1950 SS-86

Near Record Stocks of Feed Grain

In spite of liberal use of feedgrains since harvest, and heavy movement of corn to market, feed grain stocks on farms are the second largest on record for January 1, both in tonnage and quantity per animal unit.

Corn on Farms, 2.4 Billion Bushels

Corn stocks on farms total 2.4 billion bushels compared with 2.5 billion year ago and 1.5 billion two years ago at this time. 10-year average for January 1 has been 1.9 billion bushels.

Hay Stocks Ample

Hay stocks are ample...conserved by longer than usual grazing season. The 69.2 million tons on farms are up about 2 million tons from a year ago, and the supply per hay-consuming animal unit is one of the highest on record.

Wheat Stocks Down From Average

Wheat on farms January 1, at 327.2 million bushels compares with 391.4 million a year ago and 356.3 million average. Total movement from farms since harvest has been fairly heavy. Movement last three months has been relatively light.

Other Grains On Farms January 1

Oats on farms, 819.7 million bushels. Year ago, 928.4 million. Average, 776.9 million. Disappearance from farms last 3 months, 234 million bushels.

Barley, 107.5 million bushels. Year ago, 156.4 million. Average, 152.7 million. Disappearance from farms last 3 months, 41 million bushels, smallest since 1940. But disappearance in preceding quarter was fairly large.

Rye, 4.8 million bushels. Year ago, 8.7 million. Average, 15.4 million. Disappearance from farms last 3 months, 3.9 million bushels.

Soybeans, 61.9 million bushels. Year ago, 75.5 million. Average, 53.2 million. Disappearance from farms last 3 months, 163 million bushels.

Flaxseed Acreage Down From Last Year

Fall-sown flaxseed acreage in 3 States (Texas, Arizona, and California) is estimated at 316 thousand acres, only a little over half the acreage for harvest in '49, but up from average by 23 percent.

Crop-year Begins With Conditions Favorable

Conditions affecting 1950 crop yields have been favorable in virtually all areas. Farm work, up to schedule...machinery and seeds, adequate...soil moisture, adequate in most areas. Some farmers faced a problem of what to plant to replace acreage of major crops curtailed this year under crop control.

"Will More Forage Pay?"

This is the title of a new Department of Agriculture publication (MP-702) prepared by BAE, dealing with the economic aspects of using more pasture and forage on farms. The 90-page study in farm management discusses alternative production plans. And there are separate findings for the Northern, Western, and Southern States.

Plentiful Oranges Reduced by Freezes

Early and midseason orange crop was forecast as of January 1 at 49.9 million boxes, up 6 percent from last season and 14 percent more than average. Valencias were forecast at 55.7 million boxes, 6 percent above last season and 12 percent above average. But freezes in California and Arizona since January 1 will reduce these estimates. Preliminary estimates indicate losses of 1½ million boxes of Navel and miscellaneous oranges and 2½ million boxes of Valencias.

Florida tangerine production, at 4.4 million boxes, will be about same as last season and a fourth above average.

Small Grapefruit Crop

Grapefruit crop, January 1, was estimated at 36.8 million boxes, down 19 percent from last season and 27 percent less

than average. Freezes since January 1 reduced the total about 2½ million boxes.

More Lemons Than Average

California lemons on January 1 were estimated at 12 million boxes. But the freeze loss since that date will reduce that figure by about 3/4 million boxes. Production last season was 9.9 million, average, 13.2 million.

Record Milk Production Last Month

Milk production--both total and per cow--was highest on record for December. Despite reduced number of cows, production in December totaled 8,550 million pounds compared with 8,215 million year earlier and 8,174 million 10-year average for the month. But daily production per capita in December was only 1.84 pounds. In November it was 1.87; December year ago, 1.80; 10-year average, 1.93.

Milk Total Last Year Also Near Record

Total milk produced in '49 (preliminary estimate) was 118.3 billion pounds; in '48, 115.5 billion; 10-year average, 115.2 billion. Record set in '45 was 121.5 billion pounds.

New High Egg Production

Eggs per hen and total production reached new high records for December. Total laid was 4.5 billion eggs, up 12 percent from same month in '48 and 50 percent above 10-year average for the month. Total production in '49 was 56.2 billion eggs compared with 55.2 billion in '48 and 48.6 billion average.

165 Eggs Per Layer in '49

Hens laid 165 eggs per hen in '49. This compares with 162 in '48 and 145 average.

6 Percent More Layers

All areas had more layers in December than in the same month in '48. Laying flocks totaled 398.1 million, up 6 percent from year earlier and 4 percent more than average. Potential layers also are up 6 percent from a year ago.

Chicken Prices Down

Mid-December chicken prices brought farmers 22.3 cents a pound liveweight compared with 23.1 in November, and 30.7 cents mid-December '48.

PARITY PRICES FOR FARM PRODUCTS AND ACTUAL PRICES RECEIVED

COMMODITY AND UNIT	ACTUAL PRICE		PARITY PRICE
	Nov. 15 1949	Dec. 15 1949	Dec. 15 1949
Wheat, bu.	1.90	1.93	2.12
Corn, bu.	1.02	1.13	1.54
Peanuts, lb.	10.4	10.4	11.5
Cotton, lb.	27.76	26.50	29.76
Potatoes, bu.	1.34	1.31	1.76
Hogs, 100 lb.	15.60	14.80	17.40
Beef cattle, 100 lb.	19.20	19.00	13.00
Veal calves, 100 lb.	22.00	22.40	16.20
Lambs, 100 lb.	21.40	21.00	14.10
Butterfat, lb.	1/ 58.9	1/ 57.8	63.1
Milk, wholesale, 100 lb.	1/ 3.86	1/2/ 3.87	3.84
Chickens, live, lb.	23.1	22.3	27.4
Eggs, doz.	1/ 39.6	1/ 34.0	51.6

1/ Adjusted for seasonal variation.

2/ Preliminary.

Lower Turkey Prices

Live turkeys in mid-December averaged 35.3 cents a pound. This compares with the record high of 51.4 cents a pound reached in December a year ago.

Poultry Feeding Less Favorable Than Year Ago

Feeding was much less favorable than year ago--for eggs, chickens or turkeys. Poultry ration cost \$3.38 per 100 pounds, mid-December, compared with \$3.31 mid-November and \$3.62 in December 1948.

Fewer Sheep and Lambs on Feed

Number of sheep and lambs on feed in the U. S. Jan. 1 was 7 percent less than last year. Estimated 3.7 million head compares with 4 million year ago and is smallest number on feed since '22. (For figures by States and by years, 1942 to 1950, see "Sheep and Lambs on Feed," issued by BAE January 12.)

Plenty of Certified Seed Potatoes

48.4 million bushels of certified seed potatoes were produced in '49 compared with 48.3 million bushels in '48. Reports are from certifying agencies in 31 States and include 51 varieties. Largest increases were in Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Idaho, New York, Minnesota, and Maine. Smaller crops of seed potatoes than in '48 were produced in the Dakotas, Oregon, and California. Nearly half of the seed-potato crop was produced in Maine. U. S. acreage in seed potatoes was down 12 percent from '48.

More Winter Vegetables Than Last Year

Tonnage of commercial truck for fresh market, this winter season is expected to be larger than last year by 14 percent and larger than average by 29 percent, based on Jan. 1 prospects. Lettuce shows biggest increase over last year. Large increases also in cabbage, carrots and spinach. Decreases in tomatoes, green peppers and snap beans. Acreage of 18 winter crops is up 10 percent from last year and 16 percent above the 10-year average.

Increase in Fats and Oils

Fats and oils produced from domestic materials in the year beginning October '49 are expected to total over 12 billion pounds. This is 2 percent larger than the output a year earlier and well above the wartime peak of 11 billion pounds. Estimates include oil equivalent of soybeans and peanuts exported for crushing abroad.

Only Slight Increase in Edible Oils

Factory production of edible fats and oils in October and November totaled 1,550 million pounds. This was up 12 percent from the same months a year earlier. But for the '49-50 season as a whole only a slight increase is expected. Total output may be 8.9 billion pounds compared with 8.7 billion a year earlier. Increases in butter and lard will more than offset a decline in peanut oil.

Parity Ratio Down to 98

Ratio of prices received by farmers to prices paid, including interest and taxes, was down to 98 at mid-December. The ratio is below 100 for the first time since November, '41. A 3-point drop from mid-November to mid-December in the level of prices received and a 1-point rise in the index of prices paid account for the lower parity ratio. Prices received index in December was at 236 compared with 239 in November and 268 in December '48. Prices paid, at 240 compares with 239 month earlier and 246 year earlier. Farmers' prices declined from November to December for poultry and eggs, meat animals, cotton, truck and some other crops while grains and hay brought somewhat higher prices. Farmers paid higher prices for feed, clothing, building materials, and household operating items.

Good Business Sustains Farm Prices

Business continues to gain in activity. The market has been strong and continued high rates of employment and consumer income are expected to hold prices of farmers' products close to present levels during the early months of this year. Favorable outlook for the construction and automobile industries adds to the likelihood of a relatively high level of business activity in the first half of 1950. But business expenditures for plant and equipment, though still large, are at a slackening rate as compared with a year ago.

Farm Wages Average 59 Cents Per Hour

Hired farm workers got an average of nearly 59 cents an hour on Jan. 1, down slightly from a year earlier. Rate per month with house averaged \$118 compared with \$122 year ago.

Farm Employment About Same As Year Ago

Number at work on farms in December--farm family and hired--totaling 7,150,000, was about same as year earlier.

Total Employment Down In December

Civilian employment in December (Census) totaled 58.6 million compared with 59.5 in November and 59.4 in December '48. 3.5 million people were unemployed in December, up a little from the 3.4 million in November.

40 Percent of Farms Have Telephones

About 40 percent of all farms in the U. S. had telephones as of July 1, '49. This is an increase of about one-twelfth from the 37 percent reported by a representative list of farmers in '48.

Most Farm Land Is Privately Owned

Eighty-five percent of U.S. farm land is now owned by individuals. Six percent is owned by corporations. Another 6 percent is publicly held and 3 percent is in Indian lands. Total in farm land is 1.1 billion acres with 975 million acres owned by individuals. Most of the 975 million acres (nearly 80 percent) is owned by farmers and retired farmers; 14 percent by business and professional people; 5 percent by clerks and laborers.

Relatively Few Have Large Land Holdings

Most of the individual owners of farm lands in the U. S. (97 percent) have holdings of less than 1,000 acres. Three percent own 1,000 acres or more each. And the same 3 percent own 41 percent of the farm land held by individuals. Some owners have several farms, for instance the large plantations may include a number of operating farm units. The large holdings also include Western cattle ranches which require a large acreage for family living.

Proportion in Larger Holdings by Regions

In the Northeast, only 5 percent of the farm acreage held by individuals is in holdings of 1,000 acres and over; in the North Central States, 20 percent; in the South, 46 percent; and in the West 66 percent.

Fourth of Owners Have 70 to 139 Acres Each

About one-fourth of the individual owners have from 70 to 139 acres each; nearly a fifth have 30 to 69 acres, and another fifth have under 30 acres. More than one-fourth have holdings ranging from 140 to 499 acres each. (Full details in Misc. Pub. 699, "Farm Land Ownership in the U. S.")

Development Costs Limit Addition of New Farms

Several million acres of land in scattered areas in the U.S. when drained, irrigated or cleared, would be more productive for crops than some cropland now in cultivation. Much of it would be fairly well adapted to cultivation by clearing alone. Where is such land located? What would the clearing cost? Development costs, limited needs for additional crop lands, and other problems tend to hold development of new lands to a slow pace. Much of the development has been, and will be, to round out small farms to make them more efficient...Such questions and problems are discussed in the new BAE publication, "Farm Land Development, Present and Future," USDA Circular 825.

CURRENT INDEXES FOR AGRICULTURE		
INDEX NUMBERS	BASE PERIOD	Dec. 1949
Prices received by farmers	1910-14= 100	236
Prices paid by farmers, interest and taxes	1910-14= 100	240
Parity ratio	1910-14= 100	98
Wholesale prices of food	1910-14= 100	241
Retail prices of food	1910-14= 100	1/ 259
Farm wage rates	1910-14= 100	2/ 429
Weekly factory earnings	1910-14= 100	3/ 482
PRODUCTION COMPARISONS	Jan.-Dec. 1948	Jan.-Dec. 1949
Milk, (Bil. lb.)	115.5	118.3
Eggs, (Bil.)	55.2	56.2
Beef, (Dr. wt., mil. lb.)	4/ 5829	4/ 6442
Lamb & Mutton (Dr. wt., mil. lb.)	4/ 607	4/ 487
Pork & Lard (Mil. lb.)	4/ 7973	4/ 8735
All meats (Dr. wt., mil. lb.)	4/ 15132	4/ 16397
1/ November figure.		
2/ Jan. 1 figure. Adjusted for seasonal variation.		
3/ October figure.		
4/ January-November under federal inspection.		